

THE
Frequented Village:

A
P O E M.

INSCRIBED TO

DR. OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

BY A GENTLEMAN OF THE MIDDLE-TEMPLE.

Somnus agrestium
Lenis virorum, non humiles domos
Fastidit, umbrosamque ripam,
Non Zephyris agitata Tempe.

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Proprietors of the

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THE
FREQUENTED VILLAGE,

*Quandoque licebit
Ducere Sollicita jucunda obliuia vite.*

Hor.

IN yonder Vale, where fragrant zephyrs blow,
Where mix'd perfumes in odorous channels flow,
Where rosy health its flattering charms displays,
Where guile nor dwells, nor perfidy betrays,
By envy, civil broils, and hate forsook,
All, but the chiding of yon murmuring brook,
Which in meandering frolic sports along,
And hoarsely chants its soporific song !
Here, almost hid, a decent Village lies,
Whose rural station captivates the eyes,
Where various trees in verdant liveries bloom,
And form a shady, circumambient gloom ;

4 THE FREQUENTED VILLAGE.

This be my theme; I sing the village scene,
 The rich brocade that blossoms o'er the green,
 Nature's luxurious landscapes, that delight,
 And crowd their beauties on the ravish'd sight;
 The busy, active scenes that life employ,
 And temperate pleasures, which can never cloy;
 The rustic villager, who knows nor care,
 Nor stoops a wretched victim to despair;
 The bowl full flowing, and the smiling glass,
 The honest peasant, and the country lass;
 And fain, my muse would city joys compare,
 And, urg'd by freedom, manlier measures dare;
 Her purer, unpolluted fountain trace,
 And the mock patriot brand with just disgrace.

Oft, when the setting sun, serenely bright,
 Sheds forth a deeper tinge of golden light,
 When blythsome Ruth her usual work began,
 And sought the milky nectar in her can,
 When lowing herds proclaim the evening tide,
 And giant shadows from the mountain stride,
 When here, and there, the lonely owls complain,
 And bats afford diversion for the swain,
 When sighing zephyrs die along the glade,
 And only kiss the foliage thro' the mead:—
 In this soft interval of silent peace,
 When Nature's operations seem to cease,
 How oft some cot frequented have I sought,
 Thither by zeal and curious impulse brought,
 There, as I sit, and hear their various chat,
 Some praising this, and some condemning that,
 Two Lovers, each in youthful bloom alike,
 My wandering eyes with more attention strike,

And

THE FREQUENTED VILLAGE.

And Nature, whilst it struggling fights with fear,
Conveys, at length, the story to my ear,
A tale, in broken accents, warm with love,
An emblem of simplicity above;
In words like these, the ardent youth complains,
Piteous his look, without success his strains !

“ Ah, Susan ! loveliest of the lovelier fair,
With whom no maid for sweetness can compare,
Whose heavenly face like opening roses charms,
And every touch my glowing bosom warms,
Ah ! why so long thy swain his bliss deny,
Ah ! why this wintry aspect in your eye ;
That snowy breast, where candid passions move,
The seat of truth, of tenderness, and love,
Barbarian tenets never will confine,
Nor boast of chains inevitably mine ;
Those lips, which some for coral might mistake,
Such cruel truths will never deign to speak ;
With pity's eye assuage a lover's pain,
Nor longer triumph o'er a simple swain ! ”

Then, Susan with responsive sweetness cries,
The chrystal tear just starting from her eyes,
“ Alas ! my plighted word's already given,
Witness ye stars, celestial lamps of heav'n,
When hand in hand with Corydon I rov'd,
When he profess'd the warmth with which he lov'd ;
The conscious moon what followed can attest,
I gave my word, and made a lover blest,
Else Thomas had my every thought employ'd,
And none beside his Susan's hand enjoy'd.”

But

6 THE FREQUENTED VILLAGE.

But, see remoter plac'd, a happier pair,
 Their vows and warmest wishes who declare,
 Seal each profession with a balmy kiss,
 And live to joys of more extatic bliss!
 Thus, whilst they seem to interchange their souls,
 Some quaff the generous liquor from the bowls,
 Whilst some to music lend a greedy ear,
 And taste the while pure draughts of sparkling beer;
 In every face a placid smile appears,
 Bereft of cares, and uncontroll'd by fears,
 A buzz of mingling voices spreads around,
 Of tuneful accent and of tickling sound,
 The self-same sounds and buzzing murmurs swell,
 When bees in busy troops pervade their cell,
 In tuneful bands they seek their honey'd store,
 They ever labour till they make it more.

Next, Sukey, blytheft of the virgin train,
 The neatest wench that trips along the plain,
 On tip toe moving, soon a swain espies,
 On whom she fixes her observing eyes,
 They both in merry circles beat the ground,
 And tune their feet to bag-pipe's shriller sound;
 Thus mirth, in varied forms, the tribe delight,
 'Till winged moments usher in the night,
 When each a calm repose is sure to find,
 The sweet possession of a peaceful mind.

Oh, blest'd Content! than which no genial flame
 A fire so pleasing lights within the frame,
 Whose nurturing sweets a rich profusion lend,
 And healthful pleasures thro' the body send,
 Which tho' affliction opes her needy door,
 A mental treasure never can be poor.

Or

THE FREQUENTED VILLAGE.

Or if, perchance, in noon-tide's sunny hour,
 Refreshment's seat I seek within a bower,
 There on some verdant hillock please my eyes,
 And view the hay in fragrant mountains rise;
 Mark the neat huts, with circumspective pride,
 And plenty's crop wide-sporting by my side,
 Or travelling farther, see the floating wood,
 With fluttering pinions, sail from whence I stood;
 All, all around, a beauteous, moving scene,
 One verdant turf, one cultivated green!

Happy that spot that human culture knows,
 Where plenty sits, and every blessing grows,
 Where Ceres smiles, and her attending train,
 Have spread their gifts diffusive o'er the plain,
 Where every social virtue rears her head,
 And peace and joy come dancing o'er the mead;
 Thrice happy, sure, this dear frequented vale,
 Where mimic Eden wafts its choicest gale.

Or if, descending from the sloping hill,
 My errant steps conduct me to a rill,
 How sweet its pebbled music charms the ear,
 How sweet the trout with glittering vests appear,
 With timorous, twisted sallies as they sport,
 And shun the place where hostile men resort;
 While o'er my head the sighing groves complain,
 Or whistling, waft their melancholy strain;
 When scarce a blast of interruption swells,
 But deathful silence thro' the meadows dwells,
 The whispering breezes scarce a murmur make
 To fright the steer, or sport within the brake;

Here

3 THE FREQUENTED VILLAGE.

Here as I sit, in contemplation bound,
And throw my vacant, steady eyes around,
From yonder hill a sudden tumult spreads
Its doubtful language downward thro' the glades,
At length, the vallies with loud echoes ring,
And, shouts encreasing, clearer accents bring;
The vocal dogs exclaim in tuneful cries,
And soon, alas! the fearful leveret dies;
Awak'd, aloft with summon'd zeal I haste,
My eyes confirm my too prophetic breast!

So some soft maid, in star malignant born,
A friendless orphan, destitute, forlorn,
Whose timid texture, most bewitching charms,
The vengeful breast of all its wrath disarms,
A-while unknown, on bounty's hand she thrives,
And in some friendly cottage, thankful lives;
But if, alas! the rake of wealthy power,
Should chance to see her, on some luckless hour,
In swift pursuit, he hunts the timorous maid,
She dies at length, a thousand ways betray'd!

But, hark! the awful bell's alarming tone,
Proclaims a neighbour from the village gone;
An age which veneration mark'd its own,
Prolong'd a life to human ills unknown,
That gentle counsel, which in balmy showers,
Refresh'd the soul, and gladsome made the hours,
That zeal, which once with pleasure we survey'd,
All, all his virtues vanish'd and decay'd!
Up yonder hill the decent mourners bend,
A crowded train his funeral pomp attend,

With

THE FREQUENTED VILLAGE.

With solemn pace, and silent griefs proceed,
Whilst woes and anguish in their bosoms feed;
The hidden tumult gathers by the way,
And bursts at last upon the hallow'd clay;
As when the boisterous winds exert their rage,
And with the seas in clamorous fight engage,
The waves with like successive motion, pour
Their sable course, and burst upon the shore.

But if some virgin, blooming once and fair,
Her lover's joy, her parents mutual care,
Should, piteous chance, her lovely breath resign,
And fate, too cruel, mark her for divine,
The mourning train, in deep and plaintive cries,
Pour forth their woe, unknown to mean disguise,
All, all her recent virtues strike their mind,
And in their hearts a painful entrance find;
With wounds their soft pathetic bosoms tear,
Bequeath a bitter legacy of care,
Belav'd with tears, they prosecute their course,
Oppress'd with sighs, and with exclaiming hoarse.

Alike the oak by storms and tempests fares,
Which their wild fury, void of pity, tears,
Its verdant honours strew the humble ground,
Whilst plaintive murmurs from its branches sound.

Or like some vernal flower, of short-liv'd date,
Now born to bloom, and now consign'd to fate;
When by the traveller's hand, or nipping frost,
Its beauties fade, and all its sweets are lost,
Refreshing sweets, once form'd to give delight,
To please the sense, and gratify the sight,

THE FREQUENTED VILLAGE.

One moment gives it to the raptur'd eyes,
When scarce possess'd, it withers, fades, and dies.

But, oh! what eye not froze with cool disdain,
Can tears suppress, what breast can sighs refrain,
When her fond lover frantic cries puts forth,
Hangs on the bier, and testifies her worth,
Urg'd by the wild attacks of mad despair,
He vents his fury on his breast and hair;
Around the coffin'd corse his arms he throws,
And in loud accents utters forth his woes,
Till force at length the piteous scene removes,
And tears him ruthless from the maid he loves.

Hard-fated youth! no favouring hopes survive,
Pallid that cheek where roses used to live,
Declin'd that vigour, which was wont to glow,
Consum'd too soon, by fate's unerring blow;
For scarce two moons he languishes and grieves,
One common grave the frozen pair receives;
Some bounteous hand commemorates the spot,
A lettered stone declares their hapless lot;
*Beneath, a coffin'd pair embosom'd lie,
They liv'd, and lov'd, united now they die;
If love was ever to thy bosom dear,
Oh, shed one passing, tributary tear!—*

Mark, with what placid look, becoming air,
The village circle to the church repair,
That church, whose hallow'd spires devoutly shine,
A sacred building, a long worship'd shrine,
Where, every sabbath, meet the rural throng
To praise their GOD with pious heart and song;

The

THE FREQUENTED VILLAGE. 11

The infant children lisp their Maker's fame,
 Imperfect praises render to his name;
 Clean, not superb, with decency they walk,
 And of the parson, and his merit talk;
 Commend the righteous zeal, with which he tries
 To hold a light to unbelieving eyes,
 To deal out comforts, by religion given,
 And point the road to happiness and heaven.

The service o'er, how oft with modest zeal,
 I've seen them seated round their frugal meal,
 Their various judgments on the sermon heard,
 And hoary admonition have rever'd.
 That counsel, sure, must added wisdom bring,
 Borne on the still career of age's wing,
 Experience, added to an honest heart,
 Doth real knowledge to the soul impart;
 For veneration gives a just assent,
 And quells those passions which presumption lent;
 A timid, conscious want of worth creates,
 And the false fervor in our veins abates.

Oh, sacred age! whose dictates, firm and strong,
 Do full conviction bring, and truth along;
 May youth thy precepts learn with dutious will,
 And from thy maxims, vice condemn and ill,
 The paths of folly shun with caution's care,
 And may no pains your reverend bosoms tear.—

Now, fancy seat me in the lonelier cot,
 The sickly widow's much distressful lot,
 Round whom, in varied forms, destruction plays,
 And sports too cruel in a thousand ways;

Where poverty reclines her wretched head,
And want and misery their tents have spread;
Behold her, to a bed of grief confin'd,
Her body suffering, suffering more her mind,
Her children anxious to attend her word,
And every filial comfort to afford;
Then see the wealthier dame, by pity fir'd,
By bounty led, and charity inspir'd,
See where in thoughtful mood she pensive guides
Her steps, where humble poverty presides,
The village pride, the poor man's sure relief,
Of ready ear, accessible to grief,
The widow's tears she charitably dries,
And wipes the trickling rivers from her eyes,
New spirits seats within her aching frame,
And adds fresh lustre to her former fame;
A tide of blessings prosecutes the deed,
And heaven's rich favours wait her future seed,
Reflection smiling, on her pillow lies,
A heavenly object to her mental eyes.—
Oh, Charity! than which no medicine gives
Such balmy comfort to delight our lives,
Whose lasting sweets uncommon pleasures bring,
And from whose source perpetual blessings spring,
Warm'd by whose rays the sting of death we brave,
And, smiling, view the terrors of the grave.—

How oft, when joy proclaims the nuptial day,
And pairs in numbers croud the verdant way,
How oft the jocund train, with nimble pace,
And eager steps, have fought the welcom'd place,
Where Chloris, deck'd in all her rural pride,
Expectant sat, a blooming, beauteous bride,

While

THE FREQUENTED VILLAGE. 13

While gratulation thro' the cottage ran,
 Some prais'd the maid, while others prais'd the man;
 The virgin blush commended, as she spoke,
 Indulg'd the laugh, and crack'd the sprightly joke;
 The parson come, a strange pulsation beats,
 A new alarm the destin'd pair elates,
 The knot once ty'd, fresh kisses seal the deed,
 Whilst each impression cries, agreed, agreed!
 The sweet example fires the bridal throng,
 And vows and kisses spread themselves along.

So, in electric trials have I seen,
 When many hands conjointly met have been,
 When once the fire hath seal'd the crackling kiss,
 And the brisk flame communicated is,
 The shock, once suffered, soon with speed expands,
 And, previous passage, forces thro' the hands.

The cumbrous beef next loads the smoaking board,
 And viands, produce of a prudent hoard,
 The goblet dances in a circle round,
 Some laugh, some sing, some beat the echoing ground;
 But most of all the bride and bridegroom please,
 On whom the guests with admiration gaze,
 Love in their eye, and o'er their cheeks, by stealth,
 A rich suffusion laid by rosy health;
 The rapid minutes steal unknown away,
 Till night's sad mantle veils the closing day,
 On ebon throne she mounts with dusky head,
 And warns the lovers to retire to bed,
 Obedient, they the wish'd-for minutes haste,
 And real, not fictitious pleasures taste.

Happy

14 THE FREQUENTED VILLAGE,

Happy the maid, thrice happy for the year,
 Belov'd by Cupid, as to Hymen dear,
 Who, ere the bride has turn'd to soft repose,
 Has felt the mystic stocking on her cloaths *,
 Some favouring Sylph directs it, as it flies,
 And glads the watchful Amaryllis eyes ;
 Much envied fair, thy lot too plainly proves
 Each jealous maid the like distinction loves,
 Dejected sorrows on their faces sit,
 Forc'd are their smiles, affected is their wit.---

'Tis morn, the sun his youthful beams displays,
 Obliquely shoots a quivering, sickly blaze,
 Nor yet the atmosphere pervaded quite,
 Has own'd its downward, more refulgent light,
 Its crooked streams a lucid radiance send,
 And Heaven-refracted, to the earth descend ;
 Thrice had the village-cock proclaim'd the day,
 Celestial fragrance silver'd every way,
 From yonder wood, behold the village swain,
 With sturdy steps, he measures out the plain,
 With chearful countenance his course pursues,
 A dewy mantle vests his glittering shoes,
 Some seek to turn the sod, and wieldy clay,
 And so dispense the labours of the day ;
 The healthful morn the fragrant zephyrs bring,
 Refreshing odours on their scented wing,
 New vigour, from the earth, their sense assails,
 And lengthen'd minutes on their lives entails,
 All, all expressive of that blest retreat,
 Where labour lives, and peace hath chose her seat,

* This ceremony varies with the places where it is performed.

Where

THE FREQUENTED VILLAGE:

11

Where Amalthea rarest gifts bestows,
And plenty's tide in richest rivulets flows,
Where god-like industry hath shewn her face,
And golden gifts hath scatter'd o'er the place;
Blest place! where ease, on downy pinions borne,
Reclines at night, and spreads her wings at morn.

Boast ye, who in the city spend your life,
With pleasures mad, perplex'd with noise and strife,
Delights or comforts parallel'd to this,
Such pure enjoyments, such terrestrial bliss!
Far other joys your anxious bosoms fill,
Your foreign hearts assume a different will;
'Twixt ease and luxury, 'twixt grief and care,
And wanton vices, you distracted are.
Content once banish'd, say, shall ill-got wealth,
Your conscience quiet, or restore your health?
Whose every sense, in dissipation tost,
The nobler relishes of life has lost;
Sage Nature's rules who contradicting slight,
Asleep by day, who interrupt the night,
When different vices midnight vigils keep,
And blacker make the time design'd for sleep;
Their hateful progeny, disease, and death,
Or rudely waft their dire, untimely breath,
Or, unperceiv'd, advance with gradual pace;
Oh! shame to reason, as to sense disgrace!—
The scene once clos'd, new vices quickly spring,
And with their steps pernicious pleasures bring:
As the rare phoenix, singularly strange,
When fate hath perfected her mortal change,
The living ashes quicken into blood,
We see a phoenix, where the former stood.

Hapless

16 THE FREQUENTED VILLAGE.

Hapless the man, who aims not to be wise,
Nor draws the cheating mirror to his eyes;
At distance views the false-reflecting glass,
Where scenes, inverted, in their order pass;
Whose life no rules of Nature e'er hath known,
And from whose roof Content hath ever flown;
But whose desires with SELF, and SENSE, abound,
By temperance hated, as by truth disown'd,
Who ne'er a sigh, or wish petitions more,
But safe conveyance to some golden shore;
GOLD, which with glittering charms and powerful might,
Where darkness sat, hath substituted light,
Possession, which how few with wisdom share,
Too oft the treacherous fountain of despair!

And must we, then, from learning's crowded seat,
From towering spires, and gilded domes retreat,
Leave the mix'd scene, where thousand artists dwell,
To seek refinement in an humble cell,
Where erudition seldom shews her face,
And ruder principles the taste debase;
Where simple Nature, unassisted, reigns,
And rolls her heavy tide within the veins:
Forbid it, gods of scientific race,
And you, whose presence dignifies the place;
Forbid it, taste, politeness, learning, shame,
And, Oh, forbid it, heaven-implanted fame!
But rather let us emulation catch,
And, from the peasant, full perfection snatch;
From city tumults turn our greedy eye,
And learn to live as we would wish to die.

Thrice

THE FREQUENTED VILLAGE.

F2

Thrice happy place, where village morals shine,
 The heart inherit, and the soul refine;
 Religion, justice, piety live here,
 And bounteous charity, with pregnant tear,
 No frauds, nor rapine, stalk with ravenous pride,
 No cruel murder rolls its bloody tide;
 But all is sweet society and love,
 The heaven-taught lesson of the gentle dove,
 (Their tender bosoms breathe no other rage,
 For ever whispering transports in their cage;)
 No doubtful friendship spreads its specious hook,
 No adulation, no obsequious look,
 But genuine honour, undisguis'd and plain,
 Speaks thro' the maid, or warms the honest swain,
 But truth, in native colours, void of art,
 Diffuse their heavenly fervor thro' the heart.

Oh, sacred truth! of most prevailing charms,
 How bless'd that seat thy genial influence warms,
 Where thy pure ensigns, instituted, shine,
 And stamp a people with a mark divine,
 Whose candid shrine no base pollution knows,
 Where Nature dwells, and Innocency grows!
 My feeble pen would fain thy worth rehearse,
 And chant thy praises in more polish'd verse;
 Grand source, deriving blessings to mankind,
 Grace to the soul, refinement to the mind!
 And thou, sweet Liberty! inspire my song,
 Peculiar praises to the sound belong,
 Whose generous tongue a fettered speech disdains,
 But sweetly utters unaffected strains,
 Propitious on Britannia's sons look down,
 From whom thy genius never yet hath flown,

Let no ideal form, in freedom's guise,
 Mislead the vulgar, or deceive the wise,
 The breast with fluctuating bonds enthrall,
 But shine a great, a true original.

Freedom, alas! thou much perverted name,
 The sudden transport of a wanton flame,
 Which oft to madness with the vulgar turns,
 And with inconstant agitation burns,
 The man who pleas'd how oft his premium scorn,
 The evening hero, trampled on at morn;
 Teach us, with true discerning minds, to know
 The real fount whence patriot virtues flow,
 Convinc'd that freedom properly we see,
 When King and People's sentiments agree,
 When due obedience to the laws is paid,
 And just dependance in each order made;
 And, Oh! if any courts the Patriot's name,
 And, virtue-hurried, pants for deathless fame,
 Warm'd with his country's zeal, undaunted stands,
 And braves the fury of contending hands,
 Oh! heap on him your envy'd gifts, nor spare
 Your lavish honours on so bright a care,
 Exalt him still, till nought remains to crown
 Those labours which his country caus'd alone;
 But if regardless of the common weal,
 He wears an odious, hypocritic veil,
 If nought but interest in his bosom glows,
 And freedom there a cold reception knows;
 Oh! speed your thunder on perdition's wings,
 And crush the man who'd awe the best of Kings,
 His people who'd in error's footsteps lead,
 And point your vengeance at his rebel head!

Accept

THE FREQUENTED VILLAGE. 19

Accept, dear GOLDSMITH, these ingenuous lines,
Whose generous breast no thought but truth confines,
Whose page, instructive as harmonious found,
A bright example, sheds its light around ;
To thee, unfledg'd, my tender muse would soar,
Secur'd of thine, what praises with I more ?
Whose pensive ruins, sadly colour'd, tell
That, once, a people happily did dwell,
Whose desert waste, and unfrequented spot,
Proclaim a village, lost, forlorn, forgot,

So some tall monument, of letter'd fame,
Records a brave commander's deathless name,
Warns us, how many battles he has won,
And regions travell'd with the journeying sun,
With grief, the speaking monument we leave,
And wish to snatch the hero from the grave.

F I N I S.